

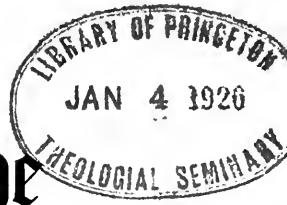
H. Osgood

CHRIST and the
Old Testament

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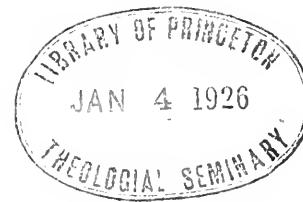
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Christ and the Old Testament

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Christ and the Old Testament

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A paper read April 14, 1902, at
the request of the Presbyterian
Ministers of Rochester, by

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Howard [✓] Osgood

“He that hath received His witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.” -- John 3: 33, 34.



N Christ's day and with His people there was only one Bible, the Old Testament. It was the same book we have now. To all who know and love and reverence Christ as our Saviour God His plain teaching concerning the book is of supreme importance. That teaching tests all others. With a clear view of the abundant, undoubted statements of Christ His disciples are provided with a sure criterion of all proposed judgments on the Old Testament. In the last analysis the questions now agitated about the Old Testament are reduced to the simple point, whether we will believe Christ's teaching or those opposed to His teaching. To this the European leaders of this opposite teaching are, as we shall see, agreed. It is not a question as to how many scholars are on one side or on the other. Nor does the settlement of the points raised depend upon a knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, of ancient or modern history, but simply and finally upon a knowledge of and firm belief in Christ's teaching or a rejection of that plain teaching.

What is now popularly and historically known as the higher criticism of the Old Testament does not merely concern Christ's teaching of the Old Testament, it far more deeply concerns the deity of Christ. If Christ was mistaken more than a hundred times about the very Bible He taught, it is insanity to suppose him God or taught by God.

It is then of supreme importance to refresh our minds with Christ's repeated plain teaching concerning Himself and His words, since He is the One above all others concerned in this question of the Bible. If He teaches with repetition throughout His course that He is God, and speaks only the words of God; that He came to earth to bear witness to the truth and was the truth itself, then in His words we have the sword of the Spirit of truth, the word of God. Let us turn to the words of Christ.

It is often asserted that Christ came slowly to a recognition of His deity, but, from the first, every year of His ministry is marked by His plain testimony that He was God, as is shown by the following selections of His most striking assertions of His deity by word and deed in the order of their occurrence during His ministry.

*ONLY ONE
BIBLE*

*CHRIST IS
GOD*

*WITNESS TO
HIS DEITY*

*DURING
FIRST YEAR*

During the first year He forgave sins by His own authority, Matt. 9: 3-6; Mark 2: 5-10; Luke 5: 20-24.

He taught, "My Father worketh even until now and I work," John 5: 17. This the Jews understood as making himself equal with God; Jesus did not deny it, but justified it, John 5: 18-20.

He taught that "the Father doth not judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son," John 5: 22, and this Son is Lord of the angels, Matt. 13: 41, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels;" and that this Son was to be honored even as they honor the Father, John 5: 23; for He has life in Himself as the Father has, John 5: 26, and like the Father the Son gives life at His own will to the dead, John 5: 21, and in the future He will raise all the dead," John 5: 28, 29.

FOLLOWING PERIOD In the following period, Christ raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain, Luke 7: 11-17.

He forgave the sinful woman's sins, Luke 7: 47, 48.

He raised from the dead Jairus' daughter, Matt. 9: 25; Mark 5: 40-42; Luke 8: 54, 55.

He taught that he came down from heaven to give and to be eternal life to those who believed him, John 6: 27, 38, 40, 51.

LAST YEAR In the last year Christ teaches that He is the Judge of the whole world, coming in His own glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, His angels, Matt. 16: 27; Mark 8: 39; Luke 9: 26; that He is the eternal "I am," "before Abraham was born I am," John 8: 58; comp. Ex. 3: 15; that "all things have been delivered unto me by the Father," and that the Father alone knew the Son, and the Son alone knew the Father and revealed Him as He the Son willed, Matt. 11: 27; Luke 10: 22.

He teaches that He gives to His followers eternal life, John 10: 28, and He says, "I and the Father are one," which He justifies as meaning that He was the equal of God, John 10: 30-38. He asserted that, "I am the resurrection and the life," John 11: 25, and illustrated that saying by raising Lazarus from the dead, John 11: 44.

JUST BEFORE CRUCIFIXION During the last week before the crucifixion, Christ again teaches that He is the Lord over the angels, "He shall send forth His angels and they shall gather His elect," Matt. 24: 31; that He is to be the King on his throne of glory, attended by all the angels,

the final Judge of the whole world, Matt. 25: 31-46; that He was the Father manifest in visible form, "he that beholdeth me beholdeth Him that sent me;" "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," John 12: 45; 14: 7, 9, and to know Him was to know the Father, John 14: 7.

Christ declares that He is the only way of access to the Father, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the Father but by me," John 14: 6; that He will send to His disciples the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, John 15: 26; and that He is about to return to the eternal glory which He had with the Father, John 17: 5.

After the resurrection, "He breathed on them and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Spirit," John 20: 22. He gives the Holy Spirit as God gave to Adam, Gen. 2: 7.

"Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said unto him, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." John 20: 28, 29.

"All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth," Matt. 28: 18. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." "I am the first and the last and the Living one, and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." Rev. 1: 8, 17, 18; 2: 8; 21: 6; 22: 13.

Yet some writers quote the following passages to prove that Christ on earth limited Himself to the restricted knowledge of a man and therefore to possibly fallible statements.

"Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature," Luke 2: 52.

Seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came if haply he might find anything thereon," Mark 11: 13.

"Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only," Matt. 24: 36; Mark 13: 32.

"Who existing in the form of God counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," Phil. 2: 6, 7.

*AFTER THE
RESURREC-
TION*

*TEXTS
MISUSED*

But those passages must be interpreted in harmony with the far more numerous assertions of Christ that He was a prophet, and that God His Father was the immediate author of all His words and teachings.

He calls Himself a prophet, Matt. 13: 57; Mark 6: 4; Luke 4: 24; 11: 50; 13: 33, 34; John 4: 44. He was sent by the Father. "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true," John 7: 28; 8: 42. He was sent by God to do His will. "I am come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me," John 6: 38; 5: 30; 4: 34; Matt. 26: 39.

His teachings and His words were not His own, but the Father's. "My teaching is not mine but His that sent me," John 7: 16. "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself, but the Father abiding in me doeth His works;" "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me," John 14: 10, 24.

He was sent by His Father to speak the things he heard from his Father. "The things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world;" "all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you," John 8: 26; 15: 15. "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God," John 8: 40. "I can of myself do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not my own will but the will of him that sent me," John 5: 30.

He spoke the things He had seen with His Father. "We speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen;" "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father," John 3: 11; 8: 38. He was sent to teach and did teach only what His Father taught and commanded Him. "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things," John 8: 28. "I spake not from myself, but the Father that sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak * * the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak," John 12: 49, 50. "The words which Thou gavest me I have given unto them;" "I have given them Thy word;" "Thy word is truth," John 17: 8, 14, 17.

Concerning the purpose of his whole ministry Christ, just before his crucifixion, says, "To this end have I been born and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," John 18: 37.

To sum up this abundant testimony of our Saviour God, the Father abiding in Christ, His prophet, spoke through Him, and the words Christ spoke were the words the Father taught Him and commanded Him to speak, and His word is truth. Christ's words and teachings are, by His own repeated assurance, God the Father's words and teachings.

The Pentateuch has for centuries been denied to be true in history or fact, and if so Moses was not the writer of any part of it. Against the Pentateuch a vast array of learning has been directed. With the Pentateuch all the rest of the Bible would fall, for it lives in the deeds and thought of the Pentateuch. The book of the Revelation is the Pentateuch in New Testament form. But if the Pentateuch stands by the teachings of Christ, the rest of the Bible stands with it. As an example of Christ's teaching concerning the whole Old Testament, we take His repeated plain statements about the Pentateuch.

The supreme question about the Old Testament and especially about the Pentateuch is: Is it true in its statements of fact, in its history?

And we first consult Christ, the Truth, Who came to bear witness to the truth, in whose mouth was found no guile, that is, no craft, artifice, deception, 1 Peter 2: 22; Isa. 53: 9. Let us follow Him through the Pentateuch.

He teaches that what is said in the first chapter of Genesis, v. 27; 5: 2, that God created man male and female, is true, Matt. 19: 4; Mark 10: 6; that the words spoken by Adam in Gen. 2: 24, were God's words, the supreme law of marriage, Matt. 19: 5; Mark 10: 7; that the devil was a murderer and liar from the beginning, as related in Gen. 3: 4, 5; John 8: 44; that Abel was a righteous man and a prophet whose blood was shed and would be required of that generation, Matt. 23: 35; Luke 11: 51; that Noah lived and entered into the ark and the Flood came, Matt. 24: 37-39; Luke 17: 26, 27.

ABRAHAM

Christ taught that Abraham was born and that he lived a true servant of God; that the Jews of Christ's day were His lineal descendants, John 8: 37-40, 58; Luke 13: 16; 19: 9; that "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it and was glad," John 8: 56; that God said, Ex. 3: 16, that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Matt. 22: 32; Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37; and that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were then living "in heaven," "in the kingdom of God," Matt. 8: 11; Luke 13: 28; 16: 22-31.

Christ taught that the law of circumcision was given before Moses as it is related in Gen. 17: 9-12, and was repeated, as in Lev. 12: 3, by Moses, John 7: 22; that Sodom, as related in Gen. 19: 15-26, was destroyed by a rain of fire and brimstone from heaven, that Lot left Sodom on the day it was destroyed and the doom of Lot's wife is a warning, Luke 17: 29-32; 10: 12, Matt. 10: 15; 11: 23, 24; that Jacob's vision of angels ascending and descending, Gen. 28: 12, would be repeated on the Son of Man, John 1: 51.

EXODUS

Passing on to Exodus, Christ teaches, that God did speak the words recorded in Ex. 3: 16 as the words of God, Matt. 22: 31, 32; Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37; that the ancestors of the Jews then before Christ did eat manna in the desert, as related in Ex. 16: 4-35; John 6: 49, 58; that God spoke the words found in Ex. 20: 12; 21: 17; Matt. 15: 4; Mark 7: 10; that Ex. 20: 12-17 contains the commandments, Matt. 19: 18, 19; Mark 10: 19; Luke 18: 20.

LEVITICUS

Of Leviticus Christ teaches that Moses, Lev. 12: 3, repeated the law of circumcision, John 7: 22; that Moses, Lev. 14: 2, ff., gave the law of the leper, Matt. 8: 4; Mark 1: 44; Luke 5: 14; that in Lev. 19: 18, the second greatest commandment of God is found, Matt. 22: 39; Mark 12: 31; that the law of Lev. 24: 5-9, was in force in David's day, Matt. 12: 3, 4; Mark 2: 25, 26; Luke 6: 3, 4.

NUMBERS

Of the Book of Numbers Christ teaches that the ancestors of the Jews died in the desert. Num. 14: 29, 32; 26: 63-65; John 6: 49, 58; that Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. Num. 21: 8, 9; John 3: 14; and that the law of the priest's service on the Sabbath, Num. 28: 9, 10, was a true law for them, Matt. 12: 5.

DEUTERONOMY

To Deuteronomy Christ gives especial honor both in his own experience and in his teaching. In Deut. 5: 16-20, He finds the

commandments of God; in Deut. 6: 4, 5, He finds and teaches the greatest of all God's commandments, Matt. 22: 37; Mark 12: 29, 30; in Deut. 6: 13, 16; 8: 3, He found the words that proceeded out of the mouth of God on which He rested His soul in His temptation, Matt. 4: 4-10; Luke 4: 4-12; in Deut. 19: 15 He finds the law which He quotes in John 8: 17, and Christ asserts that Moses wrote the commandment found in Deut. 24: 1-4, which was subordinate to the primal law of marriage found in Gen. 2: 24, Matt. 19: 3-8; Mark 10: 35.

As to the whole law, Christ taught that the whole law had one purpose and one fundamental doctrine, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them, for this is the law and the prophets," Matt. 7: 12. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. * * * Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets," Matt. 22: 37-40.

Christ taught that the law was as true as His own words. He said, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be fulfilled," Matt. 5: 18. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail," Luke 16: 17. Of His own words Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," Matt. 24: 35; Mark 13: 31; Luke 21: 33.

Christ taught that He came to fulfil the law. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil," Matt. 5: 17.

As to the writings and deeds of Moses, Christ teaches plainly that the Jews He addressed had writings of Moses then in their possession and that these writings were as true as His own words, John 5: 45-47, that the Jews then had a book known as the book of Moses and in this book, Ex. 3: 16, Moses recorded God's words, Matt. 22, 31, 32; Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37.

These writings of Moses were said by Christ to be the sufficient guide to eternal life; a more convincing witness to God's will than if one should rise from the dead, Luke 16: 29-31.

After his resurrection Christ explains to His disciples these writings of Moses, and impresses upon them that these writings,

THE WHOLE LAW

THE LAW AS TRUE AS CHRIST'S WORD.

WRITINGS OF MOSES

which they were slow to believe, contained prophecies of Himself which had been fulfilled in His life and death and resurrection, Luke 24: 27, 44.

*MOSES GAVE
THE LAW*

Christ teaches that Moses gave the law under which the Jews then professed to live; that Moses repeated, Lev. 12: 3, the law of circumcision given to the fathers, John 7: 19-23; that Moses spoke the words, Ex. 20: 12; 21: 17, which God had spoken, Matt. 15: 4; Mark 7: 9-13; that Moses lifted up, Num. 21: 9, the serpent in the wilderness, and that Moses wrote, Deut. 24: 1-4, the permission concerning divorce, Mark 10: 5.

Christ's teaching is abundant and perfectly clear.

*HIGHER
CRITICS*

Let us hear the other side, who speak far more abundantly and just as clearly.

*PENTA-
TEUCH
NOT TRUE*

To know all that the higher criticism has to say about the Pentateuch one needs to read only the writings of its two greatest leaders, Kuenen and Wellhausen. But that a fair and honest average may be had I give what ten of the more important writers say, and all the rest of their school agree with them. They shall be Kuenen, Wellhausen, Reuss, Dillmann, Knappert, Stade, Cornill, Holzinger, Smend, Piepenbring. They say that the Pentateuch is "legend, myth, not trustworthy, a proved historical fiction, transparent fiction, all confidence in it is lost." Kuenen, according to his biographer, did not believe in any God, and Wellhausen, according to his own statement, is a polytheist. But let us take the statements of some higher critics who profess to believe in the supernatural. They shall be Riehm, Kittel, Schultz, Westphal, König, Marti, Meinholt. They say that the Pentateuch "is not history, but legend, myth; it was not, as it professes to have been, revealed by God to Moses, for it is opposed to patent facts and in its teachings is contrary to the foundation of religion and of course it was not given by inspiration."

That is real, straightforward higher criticism, the only real

higher criticism, because it is the inevitable inference from its premises.

On what grounds do these learned men, scholars of high rank, base their views of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament. They tell us plainly. Kuenen of Leyden, professor of theology in the Protestant university, secretary of the Hague Society for the Defense of the Christian Religion, gives us fully his view of the "Critical Method" in the "Modern Review," of 1880. He says, that the critic "can only give us his own personal interpretation of the image reflected in his mind, so that almost everything depends upon his own qualifications and the constitution of his own mind. If no congeniality of spirit fits him to interpret the reality, he can scarcely fail to caricature it," p. 469. Then he argues that no miracle is credible, and adds, "So long as we derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene in even one single point, so long also our view of the whole continues to be incorrect, and we see ourselves here and there to do violence to the well authenticated contents of the historical documents. It is the supposition of a natural development alone which accounts for all the phenomena," p. 585. And consequently the critic "dares to form a conception of Israel's religious development totally different from that which, as any one may see, is set forth in the Old Testament, and to sketch primitive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognize in the New," p. 461.

That is the opinion of the man whom all European higher critics regard as their most learned leader.

As to the facts proving fiction which all higher critics assume to be found in the Pentateuch and Old Testament, and on which they expend a world of learning, Professor Cornill of Königsberg shall tell us. They are "Numerous parallel, double, triple narratives, accounts of the same event, which far from being harmonious, often directly contradict each other; further numerous errors in dates, express statements of time in certain narratives which cannot be harmonized with the facts and with the complete statement in other narratives. And above all, to use Goethe's words, 'the wretched, incomprehensible editing' of the whole," Introduc-

tion, p. 17. Or, as Professor Gunkel, of Berlin, says, "The clearest criterion of legend is that it frequently reports things which are quite incredible," "Legends of Genesis," p. 7.

These men, and many more, occupy chairs of theology in Protestant universities. Most of the higher critics occupy these chairs.

We often hear the boast made that the views of these higher critics concerning the Bible are now supported by the bulk of Christian scholarship of to-day. What is Christian scholarship? Is that Christian which refuses to believe and follow Christ's teaching? Can that be called Christian which contradicts Christ either point blank or by necessary inference? We do not deny the scholarship of the leaders of higher criticism. They are very learned men. I have known many of them and have gladly acknowledged the virtues I have seen in them. But I have never yet met or known a higher critic of the first rank, either in Europe or in this country, who would not tell me plainly that he could not believe Christ to be God. We have men in this country who occupy chairs in Protestant theological seminaries who teach this higher criticism; some deny in toto the deity of Christ, and others, without courage for their convictions, never teach what Christ taught, that He is God, but only teach his human nature. Can these be fairly called Christian scholars? Is the most learned man a Christian simply by reason of eating the bread supplied by Christians and occupying a chair founded and supported by Christians? Say there are one hundred higher critical scholars in the world; how many just as good scholars faithful to Christ are there in the 140,000 ministers in the pulpit in the United States?

Real higher criticism of the Old Testament plants itself firmly in another position. It absolutely refuses to regard as worthy of consideration Christ's teaching concerning the Old Testament, because, as they say, Christ's teaching is diametrically opposed to their views. (*See note at the end.*) Kuenen says: "We must either cast aside as worthless, our dearly-bought scientific method or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of the exegesis of the Old. Without hesitation we accept the latter alternative." Prophets, p. 487. Professor

*WHAT IS
CHRISTIAN
SCHOLAR-
SHIP?*

*HIGHER
CRITICISM
REJECTS
CHRIST'S
WITNESS*

Strack, of Berlin, who claims to belong to the Evangelicals, says: "As regards the passages from the New Testament we must protest against their use for the two-fold reason that if they prove the Mosaic authorship all other proofs are superfluous and a derogation from the authority of our Lord; and that the use of such proofs removes the whole question from the historical and critical domain." Schaff-Herzog Encyl., p. 1791. And Professor Gunkel, of Berlin, who also calls himself Evangelical, says: "The objection is raised that Jesus and the apostles clearly considered these accounts to be fact and not poetry. Suppose they did; the men of the New Testament are not presumed to have been exceptional men in such matters, but shared the point of view of their time. Hence we are not warranted in looking to the New Testament for a solution of questions in the literary history of the Old Testament." Legends of Genesis, p. 3. And similarly Professor Driver, of Oxford, writes an Introduction to the Old Testament of more than 500 pages, and not once in all those pages does he consider Christ's words. Like some others, he in his preface makes a general denial that this higher criticism impugns Christ's teaching, and then proceeds in 500 pages to take Kuenen's positions and show that the Old Testament is not true as history, and never once quotes Christ.

The main assertions of what is now called higher criticism against the Pentateuch and the Old Testament are nothing new. They are precisely the same that have been made by Spinoza, 1670, and by all the learned deists of the eighteenth century, and nowhere will they be found more fully and repeatedly stated than in Paine's "Age of Reason," dedicated to the People of America in 1793.

The lines are plainly drawn. No compromise is possible, though voluble compromisers in plenty offer their delusive make-shifts. The real leaders of the higher criticism of the Old Testament scorn all compromise and laugh at the weak, futile attempts offered by men of the lower ranks in Great Britain and America. These leaders say that they have shown the Old Testament to be a purely human compilation of legends and myths, and with the Old Testament falls the New Testament that is built upon the Old, and with both Testaments passes away the legend and myth

*HIGHER
CRITICISM
NOT NEW*

*NO
COMPROMISE*

of Jesus Christ. If the higher critics are right concerning the Old Testament there is no denying their conclusion about the New Testament and about Jesus Christ. None but the stupid would believe in a God who made mistakes.

But Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," whose words and teachings are God the Father's words and teachings, whose words shall not pass away but shall judge us in the last day, has given us in His words the sure test of the "oppositions of the knowledge (science), which is falsely so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith."

Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto these critics rather than unto God, judge ye.

To all who know Him as their Saviour and God, He says: "If ye abide in my word then are ye truly my disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8: 31, 32. "If a man love me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me," John 15: 7.

NOTE to p. 12.—"It is the common conviction of all the writers of the New Testament that the Old Testament is inspired by God, and is thus invested with divine authority. The remark made, as it were in passing, in a passage of the fourth Gospel, that 'the Scripture cannot be broken,' [Christ's words, John 10: 35] is assented to by all the writers without distinction. In accordance with this they ascribe divine foreknowledge to the Israelitish prophets. And far indeed from limiting this foreknowledge to generalities, and thus depriving it of all its importance, they refer us repeatedly to the agreement between specific prophetical utterances and single historical facts, and have no hesitation in declaring their conviction both that the prophet spoke of these specific facts and that they, under God's direction, occurred 'in order that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled.' It is unnecessary to support the statements by quoting passages; such passages are, as everyone knows, very numerous," * * *

"Here then is at the very beginning a first objection which the New Testament places in our way. Its judgment concerning the origin and nature of the prophetical expectations, and concerning their relation to the historical reality may be regarded as *diametrically opposed to ours*."—Kuenen, *Prophets*, p. 448.

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